

KENTUCKY BOARD OF NURSING
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ADVISORY OPINION STATEMENT

ROLES OF NURSES IN THE CARE OF INTRAPARTUM PATIENTS

Introduction

The Kentucky Board of Nursing is authorized by Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) Chapter 314 to regulate nurses, nursing education and practice, and to issue advisory opinions on nursing practice, in order to assure that safe and effective nursing care is provided by nurses to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

The Kentucky Board of Nursing issues advisory opinions as to what constitutes safe nursing practice. As such, an opinion is not a regulation of the Board and does not have the force and effect of law. It is issued as a guidepost to licensees who wish to engage in safe nursing practice.

Accountability and Responsibility of Nurses

KRS 314.021(2) holds nurses individually responsible and accountable for rendering safe, effective nursing care to clients and for judgments exercised and actions taken in the course of providing care.

KRS 314.021(2) imposes individual responsibility upon nurses. Acts which are within the permissible scope of practice for a given licensure level may be performed only by those licensees who personally possess the education and skill proficiency to perform those acts in a safe, effective manner.

Nursing practice should be consistent with the *Kentucky Nursing Laws*, established standards of practice, and be evidence based.

Statutory Definition and Policy

KRS 314.011(6) defines "registered nursing practice" as:

...The performance of acts requiring substantial specialized knowledge, judgment, and nursing skill based upon the principles of psychological, biological, physical, and social sciences in the application of the nursing process in:

- a) The care, counsel, and health teaching of the ill, injured or infirm;
- b) The maintenance of health or prevention of illness of others;
- c) The administration of medication and treatment as prescribed by physician, physician assistant, dentist, or advanced registered nurse practitioner and as further authorized or limited by the board, and which are

consistent either with American Nurses' Association Standards of Practice or with Standards of Practice established by nationally accepted organizations of registered nurses. Components of medication administration include, but are not limited to:

1. Preparing and giving medication in the prescribed dosage, route, and frequency, including dispensing medications only as defined in subsection (17)(b) of this section;
 2. Observing, recording, and reporting desired effects, untoward reactions, and side effects of drug therapy;
 3. Intervening when emergency care is required as a result of drug therapy;
 4. Recognizing accepted prescribing limits and reporting deviations to the prescribing individual;
 5. Recognizing drug incompatibilities and reporting interactions or potential interactions to the prescribing individual; and
 6. Instructing an individual regarding medications.
- d) The supervision, teaching of, and delegation to other personnel in the performance of activities relating to nursing care; and
- e) The performance of other nursing acts which are authorized or limited by the board, and which are consistent either with American Nurses' Association Standards of Practice or with Standards of Practice established by nationally accepted organizations of registered nurses.

KRS 314.011(10) defines "licensed practical nursing practice" as:

...The performance of acts requiring knowledge and skill such as are taught or acquired in approved schools for practical nursing in:

- a) The observing and caring for the ill, injured, or infirm under the direction of a registered nurse, a licensed physician, or dentist;
- b) The giving of counsel and applying procedures to safeguard life and health, as defined and authorized by the board;
- c) The administration of medication or treatment as authorized by a physician, physician assistant, dentist, or advanced registered nurse practitioner and as further authorized or limited by the board which is consistent with the National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses or with Standards of Practice established by nationally accepted organizations of licensed practical nurses;
- d) Teaching, supervising, and delegating except as limited by the board.
- e) The performance of other nursing acts, which are authorized, or limited by the board and which are consistent with the National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses' Standards of Practice or with Standards of Practice established by nationally accepted organizations of licensed practical nurses.

KRS 314.011(8) defines "advanced registered nursing practice" as:

... The performance of additional acts by registered nurses who have gained added knowledge and skills through an organized postbasic program of study and clinical experience and who are certified by the American Nurses' Association or other nationally established organizations or agencies recognized by the board to certify registered nurses for advanced nursing practice. The additional acts shall, subject to approval of the board, include, but not be limited to, prescribing treatment, drugs, devices, and ordering diagnostic tests. Advanced registered nurse practitioners who engage in these additional acts shall be authorized to issue prescriptions for and dispense nonscheduled legend drugs as defined in KRS 217.905, under the conditions set forth in KRS 314.042. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as requiring an advanced registered nurse practitioner designated by the board as a nurse anesthetist to obtain prescriptive authority pursuant to this chapter or any other provision of law in order to deliver anesthesia care. The performance of these additional acts shall be consistent with the certifying organization or agencies' scopes and standards of practice recognized by the board by administrative regulation.

Advisory Opinion

Based upon KRS 314.021(2), nurses are responsible and accountable for their decisions regarding the care of intrapartum patients.

After review of the statutes governing nursing practice the STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL NURSING PRACTICE IN THE CARE OF WOMEN AND NEWBORNS, (AWHONN) (2003), and the knowledge and skills required to provide nursing care for intrapartum patients, the Kentucky Board of Nursing issued the following opinion:

The initial and ongoing nursing assessment of intrapartum patients should be performed by a registered nurse who possesses cognitive knowledge, competent skill, and expertise in obstetric nursing. The performance of a manual vaginal examination to assess dilation, effacement of the cervix, and/or station of the fetus is within the scope of registered nursing practice.

The application of fetal scalp leads/electrodes and insertion of intrauterine pressure catheters for internal fetal monitoring based upon a documented order of the physician or a written medically approved protocol, are within the scope of registered nursing practice when the membranes have been ruptured spontaneously, or by a physician, or by an advanced registered nurse practitioner, designated nurse midwife. The artificial rupture of membranes is not within the scope of registered nursing practice, but is within the scope of practice of the advanced registered nurse practitioner, designated nurse midwife.

The licensed practical nurse may assist in the care of intrapartum patients under the direct supervision of the registered nurse or physician; however, it is not within the scope of licensed practical nursing practice to perform manual vaginal examinations, apply fetal scalp leads or insert intrauterine pressure catheters. For more information see Kentucky Board of Nursing AOS #27 entitled "Components of Licensed Practical Nursing Practice."

Nurses who care for intrapartum patients should provide care according to the STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL NURSING PRACTICE IN THE CARE OF WOMEN AND NEWBORNS, (AWHONN) (2003), and according to appropriately established policies and procedures of the healthcare facility which are consistent with the definitions of nursing practice. Nurses are responsible for having adequate educational preparation and clinical experience in the care of intrapartum patients. Registered nurses should have documented evidence of completion of continuing education, which provided for supervised clinical practice and demonstration of competency in the performance of the application of fetal scalp leads and intrauterine pressure catheters. The registered nurse who performs intrauterine pressure catheter insertion should possess substantial specialized knowledge and skill in intrapartum nursing practice, and should successfully complete both a basic and advanced fetal monitoring course, which includes catheter insertion, maintenance, and monitoring.

Determining Scope of Practice

KRS 314.021(2) holds all nurses individually responsible and accountable for the individual's acts based upon the nurse's education and experience. Each nurse must exercise professional and prudent judgment in determining whether the performance of a given act is within the scope of practice for which the nurse is both licensed and clinically competent to perform. The

Kentucky Board of Nursing has published the "Scope of Practice Determination Guidelines" which contains a decision tree chart providing guidance to nurses in determining whether a selected act is within an individual nurse's scope of practice now or in the future. A copy of the guidelines may be purchased from the Board office or downloaded from the KBN website at <http://kbn.ky.gov>.

Approved: 4/85

Revised: 1987; 1992; 1/93; 2/05